

CLAIMS:

1. A method of automatic recognition of company names in speech utterances, in which:

- at least one word sequence hypothesis is generated by a speech recognizer (10) from a speech utterance consisting of one or more words,
- 5 - a comparison is made of the word sequence hypothesis with entries which represent company names and are stored in a database (15),
- a company name is selected as a recognition result (16) in dependence on the result of the comparison.

10 2. A method as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the speech recognizer (10) produces a probability value for each word sequence hypothesis, which probability value is taken into account for the comparison.

15 3. A method as claimed in claim 1 or 2, characterized in that word sequence hypotheses produced by the speech recognizer (10) are used for an adaptation of a speech model (13) utilized by the speech recognizer (10).

20 4. A method as claimed in one of the claims 1 to 3, characterized in that certain words defined a priori are not taken into account when a word sequence hypothesis is compared with entries of the database (15).

25 5. A method as claimed in one of the claims 1 to 4, characterized in that the speech recognizer (10) utilizes a speech model (13) which was trained with the aid of the information stored in the database (15).

6. A method as claimed in claim 5,

characterized in that

appropriate variants of company names are taken into account during the training of the speech model (13).

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7. A dialogue system, more particularly, an inquiry system, comprising a processing unit (5) for automatically recognizing company names in speech utterances, which comprises

- a speech recognizer (10), which is used for generating at least one word sequence hypothesis from a speech utterance consisting of one or more words,
- a comparing unit (14), which is provided for making a comparison of the word sequence hypothesis with entries representing company names stored in a database (15) and for selecting a company name as a recognition result (16) in dependence on the result of the comparison.

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